

REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-6 and 8-33 were rejected. Claims 1-4, 6, 11, 13, 15, 22, 23 and 27-33 are amended herein, and claims 5, 25 and 26 are cancelled herein without prejudice. Claim 7 remains cancelled and new claim 34 has been added. Thus, claims 1-6 and 8-34 are pending and under consideration. No new matter has been added. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 101:

At page 2 of the Office Action, claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter.

As mentioned above, claim 25 is cancelled herein without prejudice.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b):

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,008,822 (Kumagai).

Kumagai is directed to segmenting graphic data stored in a database of a workstation (WS1) and making the segmented graphic data available to other workstations (WS2, WS3, etc.) in a network such that the other workstations are able to manipulate the stored graphic data (see, col. 6, lines 35-44). However, Kumagai manages the segmented graphic data individually and later merges the resultant data, and does not display, for example, progression of the resultant data as manipulations or changes are being implemented by the workstations (see, col. 7, line 65 through col. 8, line 5).

In contrast, claim 1 recites “divided images and ... [a] reference image substantially simultaneously displayed using ... corresponding image generation devices” (claim 1, lines 8-9). For example, as shown in FIG. 33 of the present application, a user can view an assigned divided portion of an image while viewing a reference image indicative of operations being performed by other image generation terminal devices. This enables a user manipulating a divided image to be able to refer to the target image including changes made by other users while manipulating the divided image.

As recited in independent claims 1-4 and 6, the image generation system and method of the present invention divides a target image and correspondingly distributes “the divided images”

and “the reference image” to the image generation devices, using which the divided images and the reference image are “substantially simultaneously displayed”. Kumagai does not teach or suggest that the divided images and the reference image are distributed to the image generation devices, where the divided images and the reference image are “substantially simultaneously displayed” via the corresponding image generation devices

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 8 and 11-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over various combinations of Kumagai, U.S. Patent Nos. 6,357,042 (Srinivasan), 6,701,012 (Matthews) and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0107586 (Takiguchi).

Srinivasan is limited to multiplexing metadata that is separately authored for insertion into a video data stream. Srinivasan is directed to allowing multiple authors to track separate images and add annotations including icons, graphics, etc., to a single live or pre-recorded video feed (see, col. 12, lines 47-55).

The Examiner acknowledged that neither Srinivasan nor Kumagai teach dividing a target image into layers and thus, relied on Matthews as teaching this feature. However, Matthews is limited to splitting an image into layers and determining whether a selected pixel of the image is within a particular layer for assigning color values to the pixel (see, col. 4, lines 47-64).

The Examiner also acknowledged that none of Srinivasan, Kumagai and Matthews teaches assigning identifiers to each part of two images to be combined and thus, relied on Takiguchi as teaching this feature. However, Takiguchi is directed to synthesizing images having a partially overlapping image area to create a single synthetic image based on a user's designation of matching points in the images (see, paragraph 13).

In contrast, the image distribution device of the present invention distributes respective layer information (i.e., a layer identifier) of each of the divided images to the image generation devices, and allows changes to be made to the divided images in accordance with the layer information.

As recited in amended independent claims 11, 15 and 27, the present invention includes dividing a target image into a plurality of areas or layers, “distributing images divided to corresponding image generation devices” (e.g., claim 11, lines 6-8), and integrating the divided images generated or edited by the corresponding image generation devices. Claims 11, 22,

27 and 30 further recite that “time series information” (e.g., claim 11, line 14) defining a moving picture to be generated is also distributed with the divided image.

Independent claims 13, 22, 28, 30 and 31 recite that “data indicative of an image element to be moved in the distributed image and data defining a basic movement, enlargement/reduction, rotation of the indicated image element” (e.g., claim 13, lines 15-16) is transmitted together with the divided image.

Independent claims 15, 23, 28, 29 and 31-33 recite that the divided image is “substantially simultaneously” (e.g., claim 15, next-to-last line) displayed via corresponding image generation devices, and enables users manipulating different portions of a divided image to be able to refer to the target image including changes made by other users while manipulating their respective portion of the divided image.

For the above reasons, it is submitted that the independent claims are patentable over the combination of Kumagai, Srinivasan, Matthews, and Takiguchi.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from independent claims 11, 13, 15, 22, 23 and 25-33 are patentably distinguishable over the combination of Kumagai, Srinivasan, Matthews, and Takiguchi. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, as recited in claim 8, “said distribution unit distributes only a divided image requiring generation of a corresponding divided image to the image generation device”. The combination of Kumagai, Srinivasan, Matthews, and Takiguchi does not teach or suggest a system that “distributes only a divided image requiring generation of a corresponding divided image to the image generation device”, as recited in claim 8.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

NEW CLAIM:

New claim 34 has been added to recite that the present invention includes, “correspondingly displaying the divided portion of the image and the reference image using the image generation devices, the reference image indicative of a change made to the image by at least one of the image generation devices” (claim 34, lines 5-7) and “integrating the divided portion of the image from the at least one of the image generation devices reflective of the changes made to the image and transmitting the integrated image to each of the image generation devices” (claim 34, lines 8-10).

For the reasons discussed above, it is submitted that new claim 34 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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